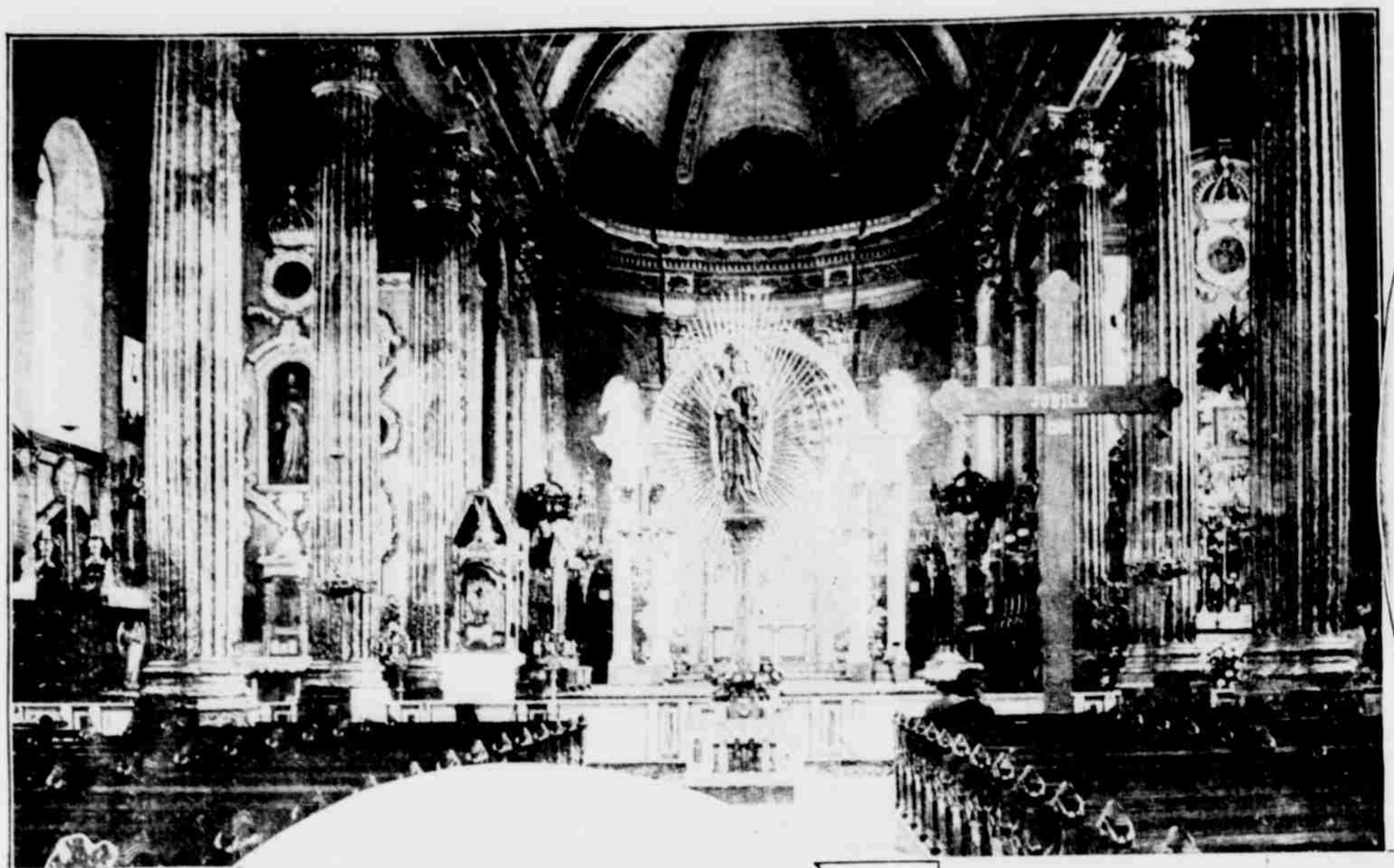

Top, left—Interior of St. Anne's. Marble pillars support a lofty groined ceiling elaborately carved and guilded, the nave being lighted by many stained glass windows picturing in the highest form of the art scenes in the life of St. Anne and episodes in the long history of the shrine itself. At the head of the 15-foot wide central aisle and immediately before the great central altar of Carrara marble stands the statue of St. Anne holding the infant Mary. The relic—a piece of bone from the arm of St. Anne—occupies a reliquary of gold set in the base of the statue facing the reader and is seen through the circle of plate glass which the kneeling pilgrim kisses. Top, right—The permanent reliquary in which the bone is exhibited on special occasions, now kept in the sacristy. It represents an arm with hand of solid gold in the gesture of apostolic blessing. The relic (seen through glass) occupies the relative position it had originally in St. Anne's arm. Bottom, left—Scene in Rue Commercial, the main street of the village. It will be observed that there are many hotels and that street signs are in French. Bottom, right—Exterior of the Basilica of St. Anne de Beaupre. This splendid stone edifice built at a cost of some $200,000 in 1878, on the site of the little wooden "sailors' chapel," the fame of whose healing miracles made St. Anne's famous as early as 1666.

Lourdes of America Draws Hosts of Pilgrims

By PAUL TYNER

ONE may leave that modern Babylon, New York, after late dinner in the evening and be in St. Anne de Beaupré for lunch next day. Yet it is like jumping from the very center of twentieth century materialism into the remoteness in time and space as well as in state of mind of a medieval fishing hamlet of France or Italy. Not merely is the hurly-burly of the metropolis exchanged for the stillness of a quaint old village set amid green fields on the banks of a peacefully flowing river, but one finds himself in the midst of a people speaking the French of the early seventeenth century and, to a marked degree, thinking the thoughts and living the life of a community of olden France. In an age which is commonly regarded as the very antithesis of an age of faith, this village is just now witnessing the strange spectacle of pious pilgrims from all parts of the western continent streaming in to pay their devotions at the splendid shrine of the Basilica of St. Anne de Beaupré, a shrine which in architecture and adornment rivals the richest of the Old World cathedrals.

These pilgrims come from all parts of Canada, and from all parts of the United States in even greater numbers. In the 40 years between 1879 and 1919, they totaled no less than 5,325,209, a host greater than that which made the first and second crusades. Persons suffering from all manner of diseases are they; the blind, the deaf, the halt and the lame; and all seek relief from their sufferings and infirmities by miraculous interposition.

Of course, "there are no miracles!" according to the modernist, and yet the saying that "All things are possible to him that believes" is in train to become an accepted scientific axiom capable of actual demonstration, instead of a vague aphorism having abstract rather than concrete meaning.

A fact is a fact, an eternal challenge to intelligent comprehension. "Impossible" has become an unscientific word. The healing experiences of pilgrims to the shrine of St. Anne are not to be pooh-poohed. Confirming the saying of Rouchefacould, the mediocre mind may go on condemning what it does not understand; but the progressive mind will ever seek the truth and an understanding of the truth. To be truly free we must know the truth.

Of the 271,000 pilgrims and visitors to St. Anne's last year and the 300,000 who probably will make up this summer's total, not all will go on the record of the healed. Perhaps only one in a hundred or one in a thousand will be counted among those whose petitions are granted—to the outward observation. Keeping in mind that practically all are cases given up by the physicians as hopeless from the medical standpoint, the healing of even one in a thousand means an achievement. Reasoning by analogy, the healing of one proves the existence of a healing power—a power capable of healing in *every* case, were the law of that one healing complied with fully. A law is proved quite as much by what the world calls "failures" as by what the world calls "successes." Failure to obtain the desired result in spiritual healing must be explainable in much the same way as failure in a chemical or mechanical process. Sand in the gear, a loose bolt, or a defect in ignition may make all the difference between a smooth-running and a balky motor car. A slight variation in temperature or an infinitesimal variation in the proportions may spoil a chemical combination. Under or over exposure may spoil a photographic plate.

These, of course, are not the explanations vouchsafed by the good Redemptorist fathers in charge of the church of St. Anne. Yet they were suggested to my mind by a remark made by Brother Jean-Louis, the bright, earnest and enthusiastic young juvenate who was good enough to act as my cicerone.

It was in a pause between the morning services. After inspecting the hundreds of crutches and canes ranged against the back wall and around three pillars on which they reached almost to the roof, we had advanced up the broad central aisle to where the precious "relic" was exposed to the veneration of the faithful at the foot of a statue of St. Anne carrying the infant Mary in her arms. Itself an exquisite piece of art, both in modeling and coloring, the statue occupied a niche or arch formed of myriad tiny colored electric lights. A mass of fresh roses and lilies sent up their incense from its feet. The beautifully carved golden reliquary was set in the base; an opening near the top and facing us showed plainly, through a circle of thick plate glass, a bit of bone yellowing with age and about two inches long by one inch in width—a bit of bone from the arm of the grandmother of Jesus!

The August sun was pouring through the beautiful stained glass windows. Behind the statue, in the deep recess separated by a wonderfully carved marble communion rail, rose the great altar before which swung three richly worked lamps, the central one of gold and those at either side of silver, in which burned softly the mystic lights symbolic of the life divine and eternal. The notes of a Gregorian chant sung in the confidently conquering notes of a clear baritone, and the deep murmur of the organ accompaniment seemed still to linger in the air. Scattered through the body of the church were perhaps half a hundred worshipers who had lingered after the mass for special devotions. Others were kneeling before one or the other of the "stations of the cross" in sculptured and colored high relief that adorned the walls at intervals between the tall windows. In one corner, a venerable white-haired priest was silently praying. On the other side a little group of Ursaline nuns from the neighboring convent, in their brown habits, were telling their beads in adoration before the side altar dedicated to the Virgin Mary.

Quietly, reverently and moving with evident difficulty, a young man, whose pale face showed traces of pain long and patiently endured, approached the reliquary and kneeling kissed the glass covering of the relic, having first wiped it with a fresh handkerchief. Then he bent his head for a few moments in prayer. Rising, he betook himself to a neighboring pew, where he continued his devotions. He was succeeded at the foot of the shrine by a young girl seemingly suffering from some defect of vision, if not total blindness. She was led to the spot by an older woman—perhaps her mother. And so a constant stream of afflicted persons flowed to the prayer step of Champlain marble. No lines were formed, but there seemed to be some understanding by which no single devotee remained for more than a few moments before the relic, each giving way to the next who emerged from a pew close at hand in perfect quiet and perfect order. One old man —he might have been a laborer from his toil-worn frame—whose twitching head and shoulders indicated a nervous palsy, seemed particularly intense, returning

(Concluded on page 10)